

24 July 1963

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Nasir's 22 July Speech

1. Nasir's two-hour speech on 22 July was devoted almost entirely to recounting his differences with the Syrian Baathist leadership, from the time of formation of the Syrian-Egyptian union in February 1958 to the bloody suppression of the pro-Nasirist coup attempt in Damascus last week. Nasir's aim was to place the blame for the failure of the current unity move (Egypt-Syria-Iraq) squarely on the self-serving activities of the Syrian Baathists. Iraq was hardly mentioned.

2. Nasir was careful, however, to concede that there were some conscientious Arab nationalists among the Baathist membership, and he obliquely encouraged these to change their leadership. In addition, he called for the formation of a new pan-Arab organization to bring together all the various pro-unity elements in the Arab world, including the "good" Baathists. Egyptian propaganda is already busy trying to sell this idea in competition with the area-wide appeal of the Baathist movement.

3. The speech contained only a brief comment on the war in Yemen, and said nothing about disengagement or withdrawal of UAR forces.

4. Nasir made no reference to East-West problems or his relations with the Communist bloc and the free world, an exceptional omission and a measure of his obsession with intra-Arab affairs.

5. Nasir referred to Israel with restraint, stating that he had no "definite plan" for the liberation of Palestine. He indicated that he felt the first concern of the Arabs should be their own unity and internal social and economic development.

6. A small portion of the speech was given over to a recital of the considerable social and economic progress of Egypt, which Nasir cited as an example for the other Arabs.

7. In sum, the speech was one of his less inspired performances, relatively narrow in its scope and containing no surprises.